Eucalyptus Trees Spoiling Soil

2108. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Eucalyptus trees spoil the surrounding soil; and

(b) if so, the action taken to prohibit its planting in urban areas?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Forest Cover in N.E.R.

2109. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the present area under forest cover in the whole of N.E. Region;

(b) whether it is upto the required need; and

(c) what are the plans and projects of the Ministry to bring it closer to standard level of forest cover in the Region?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) As per State of Forest Report, 1999, the total forest cover in the N.E. Region is 1,63,799 sq.km. which is about 64% of the geographical area.

(b) The National Forest Policy, 1988 stipulates that the national goal should be to have a minimum of one-third of total land area of the country under forest or tree cover. In the hills and in mountainous regions, the aim should be to maintain two third of the area under such cover. North-eastern Region comes under the second category where we should have two-third area under tree/forest cover.

(c) Details of the plans to bring it closer to the national goal laid down under National Forest Policy, 1988 of the Government of India are:

(i) Afforestation programmes are undertaken by State Governments/ UT Administrations from their own resources as well as with financial assistance from Government of India.

(ii) Guidelines have been issued to all States/UTs to involve village communities in protection and regeneration of degraded forests.